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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2963
INFO RUCNCOM/EC CARICOM COLLECTIVE
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 0183
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHINGTON DC
RUEABND/DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMIN HQ WASHINGTON DC
RUEABND/DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMIN SAN JUAN PR
RUEABND/DEA MIAMI FL
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 GEORGETOWN 000022

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POR OF SPAIN ALSO FOR DEA AND LEGATT
CARACAS FOR LEGATT
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD

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SUBJECT: CABINET SECRETARY ANNOUNCES GUYANA DEA OFFICE

REF: A. 05 GEORGETOWN 1275
B. 05 GEORGETOWN 1328

¶1. (U) SUMMARY. Presidential Secretariat Head Roger Luncheon told a press conference that the GoG welcomes the establishment of a U.S. DEA office in Guyana, but acknowledged that certain details still need to be addressed. The state-owned newspaper carried the story the following day under the frontpage headline "DEA to set up Guyana base". Although any signal of GoG commitment to fight narco-trafficking is welcome, Luncheon's comments contain nothing new. END SUMMARY.

GoG Puts DEA Plans in the News

¶2. (U) At his weekly post-Cabinet media briefing on December 29, Presidential Secretariat Head Roger Luncheon said that the GoG welcomes the establishment of a U.S. DEA office in Guyana, but acknowledged that certain details still need to be addressed. On December 30, the state-owned Guyana Chronicle newspaper carried the story under the headline "DEA to set up Guyana base" with a long story that quoted Luncheon as saying "we are in discussions with Americans and the American administration and some details need to be addressed for us to see that the plans come to fruition" and "I don't have a problem in recognizing that we need a DEA in Guyana".

Situation Remains the Same

¶3. (SBU) Although any signal of GoG commitment to the fight narco-trafficking is welcome, Luncheon's comments contain nothing new. The USG has held discussions with the GoG off and on since 1999 about setting up a DEA presence in Guyana. This is the second time in as many months that the GoG has put DEA in the press. In late 2005, an aide in the Prime Minister's Office told a reporter that the GOG had invited DEA to set up a DEA office in Georgetown. That reporter did his homework and the resulting story did not get much play. Over the years, several issues have prevented the establishment of a DEA presence here. The current stumbling block is the GoG's inability or reluctance to give approval for basic logistical details. Post's position remains the same -- the USG is ready to work with and advise the GoG as soon as the GoG is fully prepared to move forward in its fight

against narco-trafficking.

Text of GoG Statement

¶4. (U) Following is the text of the Government Information Agency's (GINA) December 29 statement regarding Luncheon's comments. Begin text:

The PPP/C Administration welcomes the establishment of a United States (US) Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) Office in Guyana, but acknowledges that certain details have to be discussed before such an entity becomes a reality.

Head of the Presidential Secretariat and Cabinet Secretary, Dr Roger Luncheon, made these remarks on

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December 29, at his weekly post Cabinet media briefing.

"Guyana like other developing countries in the region, are not fully equipped to handle criminal activities associated with the narco-trade. One can concede that the United States' role as international or hemispheric policeman is necessary for the effective handling of this situation," Dr Luncheon said.

On several occasions officials from [sic] the DEA have assisted local law enforcement officers with investigations regarding narco-trafficking. The establishment of an office in Guyana will provide local officials with the support, expertise and resources, which are integral to stemming the drug trade.

Dr. Luncheon said that Government is engaged in discussion with the US Administration, and pending the

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outcome, the details for the establishment of the DEA office will be determined.

End text.

BULLEN